



# YEAR OF CLEAN WATER

## Water Education Weekly Drops

Week Six

## Chesapeake Bay Program

The Chesapeake Bay Program is a regional partnership that has led and directed the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 1983. The Chesapeake Bay Program partners include the states of Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia; the District of Columbia; the Chesapeake Bay Commission, a tri-state legislative body; the Environmental Protection Agency, representing the federal government; and participating citizen advisory groups

The Chesapeake Bay Program was formed to provide coordination and support for the goals of the historic *Chesapeake Bay Agreement of 1983*. On June 28, 2000, the Bay Program adopted *Chesapeake 2000* - a comprehensive and far-reaching Bay agreement that guides the partners in their combined efforts to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay through the year 2010, and beyond.

The Chesapeake Bay -- the largest estuary in the U.S. -- is an incredibly complex ecosystem that includes important habitats and food webs. The Bay itself, its rivers, wetlands, forests and land all provide homes, protection or food for complex groups of species.

- 1. Is the Chesapeake Bay Program a federal program run by EPA?**
- 2. How many people work in the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office in Annapolis?**
- 3. How large, deep, long and wide is the Chesapeake Bay?**
- 4. What is the Bay's largest tributary?**
- 5. What lives in the Bay?**

**1. Is the Chesapeake Bay Program a federal program run by EPA?**

- A. No. Although EPA provides seed money for the Bay restoration effort and has a lot of responsibilities for coordinating and staffing the Chesapeake Bay Program, it is a unique regional partnership dominated by its state partners. The Chesapeake Bay Program is authorized under Section 117 of the Clean Water Act, and EPA has numerous support responsibilities, but EPA is only one of six equal signatory partners who traditionally sign Chesapeake Bay agreements, such as the landmark *Chesapeake 2000* agreement.

## **2. How many people work in the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office in Annapolis?**

- A. The EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office (CBPO) has 68 employees, but only 18 are EPA employees. The office houses 14 other federal agency representatives from five different agencies and virtually all the others are grantees from state government, universities, private non-profit organizations and interstate commissions. In addition, CBPO in Philadelphia houses seven full and part time EPA staffers.

## **3. How large, deep, long and wide is the Chesapeake Bay?**

- A. Chesapeake Bay is about 200 miles long, stretching from Havre de Grace, MD, to Norfolk, VA. The Bay's width ranges from 3.4 miles near Aberdeen, MD to 35 miles near the mouth of the Potomac River. The Bay is the largest estuary in North America and the second largest in the world (the lower Ob River in Russia is the largest). The Bay's watershed covers 64,000 square miles and all or part of six states and the District of Columbia and averages only about 21 feet in depth. In fact, a person who is 6 feet tall would be able to wade through over 700,000 acres of the Bay and barely get their hat wet. A few deep channels that are over 100 feet deep, provide important passageways for ships to get into ports.

## **4. What is the Bay's largest tributary?**

- A. The Susquehanna River is the longest river on the east coast and provides about half of the freshwater to Chesapeake Bay. The next largest tributary is the Potomac, contributing about 20% of the Bay's flow.

## **5. What lives in the Bay?**

- A. The Bay supports more than 3,600 species of plants, fish and animals, including 348 species of finfish, 173 species of shellfish, and over 2,700 plant species. Young crabs hide from predators in underwater grasses, while oysters filter water as they feed on plankton. The Bay is home to 29 species of waterfowl and is a major resting ground along the Atlantic Migratory Bird Flyway. Every year, one million waterfowl winter in the Bay's basin.

For more information on the CBP: <http://www.epa.gov/r3chespk/>  
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